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Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 57/48, on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the resolution, including support to the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity. In his report of 26 January 2004 (A/58/694, para. 93), the Secretary-General indicated that he would report comprehensively on the enhancement of Africa's peacekeeping capacities. In its report of 26 April 2004 (A/58/19, para. 76), the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations looked forward to the submission of the aforementioned report at the end of 2004. The present report is submitted in compliance with the request of the General Assembly.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/48 of 20 January 2003, urged the United Nations to contribute, where appropriate, to the enhancement of the capacity of the African Union to deploy peace support missions and requested me to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

II. Role of African regional and subregional organizations in peacekeeping

2. Since my last report of 12 February 1999 on the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity (A/54/63), the United Nations has been faced with a massive surge in demand for peacekeeping. Today, there are more than 53,000 troops, military observers and civilian police serving in 17 United Nations missions around the world. More than half of them are in Africa. In the past year alone, the Security Council has authorized new missions in Burundi and Liberia and has expanded the existing missions in Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Another multicomponent mission is being planned for the Sudan.

3. During this period, the African Union and subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have played an increasingly prominent role in the maintenance of peace and security in their region. Four out of the seven current United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa are composed of "re-hatted" African troops originally deployed under the auspices of either ECOWAS or the African Union.

4. The case of the Sudan is indicative of the new partnership that has emerged in recent years between the United Nations and African regional and subregional organizations in the area of peacekeeping. In August 2004, at the request of the African Union, I dispatched a United Nations team of experts to Addis Ababa and the Sudan to support African Union planning for an expanded mission in Darfur. The team developed a comprehensive plan which outlined the concept of operations and support requirements for an expanded African Union mission. The plan also made provisions to enhance the capacity of the African Union headquarters to manage such an operation. The United Nations subsequently decided to establish a small United Nations assistance cell to be based in Addis Ababa under the authority of my Special Representative to the Sudan. The cell, which comprises political, military, police, logistics and financial expertise, will eventually be integrated into an African Union Commission Task Force on Darfur.

5. Cooperation between the United Nations and subregional organizations such as ECOWAS has also intensified. From 16 April to 2 May 2003, at the request of the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations provided logistical and financial advice to the Community regarding the development of support plans and cost estimates for the establishment of the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI). The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) also provided valuable technical assistance to ECOWAS for the planning of the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) and played a critical role in the deployment and sustainment of the first ECOWAS troops in Liberia. In Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations operation (UNOCI) and ECOWAS are

working closely together to advance the peace process and sit together on the Monitoring Committee chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

6. My Special Representative for West Africa has been actively cooperating with the States and organizations in the subregion to deal with sensitive cross-border security problems, such as the illicit trafficking of weapons and combatants. They are also working together to develop a common strategy for conflict prevention and consolidation of peace in the Mano River region.

7. In East Africa, the United Nations has supported the Intergovernmental Authority on Development since October 2003 and has initiated preparatory work on how best to support the efforts of the parties to implement a peace agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army.

III. Role of the African Standby Force in an emerging flexible response system

8. The transformation of the Organization of African Unity into the African Union, accompanied by the emergence of a new continental security architecture founded on the principles of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, has profound implications for the future of peacekeeping in Africa. Of particular note was the third African Union Summit, held in Addis Ababa from 6 to 8 July 2004, during which the African Union, by its decision Assembly/AU/Dec.35 (III), formally approved the Policy Framework Document on the establishment of the African Standby Force and the Military Staff Committee.

9. According to the Policy Framework Document, which was prepared by the African Chiefs of Defense Staff with assistance from the United Nations, each of the five subregions is to establish a standby brigade by 2010, composed of nationally based units available for rapid deployment under the auspices of the African Union, a subregional organization such as ECOWAS or the Southern African Development Community or a subregional coalition of the willing. The African Standby Force, which is primarily military in capability, would participate in the full range of peacekeeping scenarios, from ceasefire monitoring to complex, multidimensional peacekeeping and peace enforcement.

10. In an era of competing security demands, the determination of the African Union to press ahead with its ambitious peace and security agenda is a welcome indicator of the willingness of African Member States to share the burden of maintaining peace and security on the continent. As noted above, ECOWAS interventions in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire and the African Union's mission in Burundi were instrumental in averting further bloodshed in those countries and in creating the conditions for the deployment of full-scale United Nations peacekeeping operations. I commend them for their efforts and welcome the decision of the African Union Assembly to approve the African Standby Force concept.

11. The impressive achievements of ECOWAS and the African Union have helped bring to light the more positive aspects of partnership with African organizations. However, in seeking to promote "African solutions to African problems", the

international community must be careful to avoid creating a segregated environment in which Member States only contribute to peacekeeping within their own region. As I stated at the fifth high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations, held in New York in July 2003, the international community's vision of global security should be one that draws on the resources and legitimacy of a network of effective and mutually reinforcing multilateral mechanisms — regional and global — that are flexible and responsive to our rapidly changing and integrating world.

12. The experiences of the past few years suggest that this new, multilayered security architecture is already beginning to emerge. The challenge today is to move beyond purely ad hoc arrangements and put in place a system capable of generating a rapid and flexible response to crises in Africa and elsewhere. The development of the African Standby Force would allow African Member States to contribute more effectively to both African and United Nations-led peacekeeping operations in Africa and elsewhere. The Force would therefore be a welcome addition to the existing set of tools available to the international community for managing crises in Africa and other parts of the world.

IV. The way forward

13. The African Union will not be able to implement its multifaceted agenda without the sustained support of the international community. Recognizing the enormity of the challenge, in its decision to approve the Policy Framework Document on the establishment of the African Standby Force, the African Union also appealed to the organization's international cooperating partners, in particular the Group of 8, the European Union and the United Nations, and bilateral partners to provide the support required to facilitate the establishment of the Force.

14. In this regard, I welcome the commitment made by the members of the Group of 8 at their last annual summit, held in Sea Island (United States of America) in June 2004, to train and, where appropriate, equip 75,000 peacekeepers by 2010 as part of a plan to expand global capability for peace support operations, particularly in Africa. The United Nations will continue to participate actively in all related consultations and coordination meetings and stands ready to place its expertise at the disposal of the Group of 8 and its African partners.

15. The European Union, which is assisting Africa, including through the establishment of an African Peace Facility of €250 million, has also demonstrated its commitment to strengthening the African Union's ability to conduct peace support operations. The Peace Facility has already proven its usefulness in covering a significant proportion of the costs of the African Union's observer mission in Darfur. It is also providing funds so that the African Union can expand its peace and security staff capacity in the near term. I comn nd the European Union for the support it has provided so far and welcome its declaration of 6 July 2004, in which it reiterated its intention to continue supporting programmes and activities geared towards strengthening peace and security mechanisms in Africa.

16. To date, the United Nations has focused primarily on building the capacity of individual African troop contributors to participate in United Nations-commanded peacekeeping operations. In January 2003, for example, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations organized a conference in Freetown entitled "Partners in

Peacekeeping: Logistics Support Issues of the United Nations and Troop-Contributing Countries" in order to explore ways of strengthening the operational readiness of African troop-contributing countries through better logistical support. In the same year, the Department provided peacekeeping training courses in Senegal and Namibia, a pre-deployment training course for the South African Task Force of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a headquarters training course in UNAMSIL for the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire. Visits to national peacekeeping training centres in Senegal, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa were also conducted with a view to identifying generic and specific training needs and other potential areas of cooperation.

17. There is clearly much more the United Nations can do to assist the African Union in the implementation of its agenda. However, Member States must also be willing to provide the Organization with a clear mandate and the required resources. Moreover, given the enormity of the challenge, there is an urgent need for the United Nations and its key strategic partners to coordinate their efforts within the framework of a joint action plan that reflects comparative advantage in delivering peace and security, the needs and wishes of the African Union, regional economic communities, Member States and, last but not least, the people of those countries in which peacekeeping operations have or might be mounted.

18. In order to have a real impact, such a plan would have to address the major "systemic" factors identified by the Africans as preventing African Member States and regional organizations from conducting and participating in peacekeeping operations more effectively. These include:

- The absence of a common doctrine and training standards
- Lack of equipment and adequate logistical support, including strategic sea and airlift capabilities
- Inadequate funding
- Lack of institutional capacity for the planning and management of peacekeeping operations within the African Union and subregional organizations.

Examples of concrete initiatives the United Nations could undertake in collaboration with its key African and non-African partners are provided below.

Doctrine and training

19. In endorsing the African Standby Force concept, African heads of State have also expressed a preference to use United Nations doctrine, procedures and training standards, modified if necessary to meet African "specificities". The Organization is in a unique position to help African peacekeepers acquire the knowledge and skills they need to perform effectively and deal with key issues, such as gender, human rights and civil-military cooperation. In this regard, the United Nations has made every effort to ensure that officers from both established and emerging African troop-contributing countries are kept up-to-date on the standardization of generic training modules through seminars such as the senior management and United Nations Training Assistance Team seminars organized in Accra and Nairobi for both civilian police and military officers.

20. Beyond its current training activities, the United Nations could also assist in the training of headquarters staff officers from the African Union and subregional organizations by: (i) inviting their representatives to attend relevant rapid deployment and planning exercises conducted by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and its partners; and (ii) arranging programmes for African Union headquarters staff officers in United Nations Headquarters, including in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other departments, for short periods to observe and, where appropriate, participate in activities associated with the planning, mounting and management of United Nations peace operations. Costs relating to such programmes would need to be covered either by voluntary contributions or by trust funds that could be used for this purpose.

21. A number of African Member States have expressed an interest in providing police officers for inclusion on the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on-call roster. This is a welcome development since the United Nations, which has civilian police deployed in 13 missions — six of which are in Africa — is badly in need of civilian police personnel with specific language and technical skills. In this regard, the United Nations could conduct training programmes for middle-level police managers from African countries with a view to preparing them for managerial and policy-making positions in peacekeeping operations.

22. The United Nations Mine Action Service continues to ensure the coordination of mine action training and provides mine risk education materials and procedures which are used in United Nations multidisciplinary missions and by relevant United Nations agencies. It assists in training selected personnel, such as Kenyan troops deployed in the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, to remain in accordance with international mine action standards. It also supports local mine action capacity-building, including helping Governments, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to comply with anti-personnel mine ban treaty obligations. These arrangements could be expanded.

Logistical support

23. Facilitating logistical cooperation with individual troop-contributing countries or their subregional organizations is now an important aspect of United Nations peacekeeping. Logistical cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations is mutually beneficial when either organization takes over responsibility for a peacekeeping mission from the other. This cooperation could be expanded systematically to include information exchange, equipment interoperability, technical training and facilitating coordination with troop-contributing countries.

24. Until the African Union develops the capacity to support its peacekeeping operations fully, the United Nations may consider models of cooperation with the African Union in the area of logistics. For example, if mandated by the Security Council and provided with adequate resources by the General Assembly, the Organization could offer full United Nations logistical support to an African Union-led peacekeeping mission.

25. Another way of supporting the African Union in the area of logistics would be for Member States to authorize the establishment of a revolving fund designed to allow African Member States to obtain equipment from liquidating peacekeeping missions in Africa on a short-term loan basis or to purchase equipment from the

United Nations strategic deployment stocks and United Nations system contracts. This would have the added advantage of facilitating equipment interoperability.

26. The United Nations can also facilitate equipment interoperability by promoting the use of a common set of equipment in a particular mission area and sharing lists of standardized equipment (vehicles, communications and information technology, and medical equipment) used in its operations in Africa. The Organization could also share its vendor list with the African Union and regional economic communities in order for them to have global access to sources of equipment and services at the most competitive rates.

27. The use of common equipment would also facilitate the technical training being conducted by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in its main logistics base in Brindisi, Italy. In this regard, the Department will continue to make available and could expand slots for African Union participants in the logistical training being conducted. Provided the necessary funding is available, the Department could also send a small team of trainers to the African Union to train the trainers in the required technical area.

Strategic headquarters capacity

28. The capacity of African regional and subregional organizations to plan and conduct peacekeeping operations remains weak. However, over the past four decades, the United Nations has developed a significant capacity to plan, launch, manage and conduct peacekeeping operations. This is a valuable asset that could be used to strengthen the strategic headquarters capacity of the African Union and the subregional organizations. Indeed, these entities continue to request support from the United Nations.

29. In the short-to-medium-term, it is vital that the United Nations continue to assist the African Union and subregional organizations, such as ECOWAS, in the planning and management of African-led peacekeeping operations, particularly if there is an expectation that the United Nations might eventually take over. In this regard, the request made by Security Council, in the context of its resolution 1556 (2004), that I assist the African Union in the planning of an expanded observer mission for Darfur is a welcome action which should be developed into a standard practice.

30. Longer-term programmes, such as staff exchanges and the secondment of Department of Peacekeeping Operations staff to the headquarters of the African Union and subregional organizations would also go some way towards helping them build a cadre of qualified civilian and military planning staff. In this regard, if suitably resourced, the United Nations could make available to the African Union a small core planning and advisory capacity to assist in the initial planning and start-up of an African Union-led peacekeeping mission. This core capacity could consist of representatives from the political, administrative, logistics and military and civilian police units in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and its field missions. They may be temporarily attached to the African Union headquarters on the basis of a memorandum of understanding and for an agreed period, depending on the needs of the Department and its field operations. The United Nations is not currently resourced to be able to guarantee this type of support at short notice for sustained periods. Additional resources are required to meet this surge.

31. The role played by the Situation Centre of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the establishment and strengthening of the African Union's Situation Room is an excellent example of how United Nations expertise can be placed at the disposal of its African partners. In February 2002 and March 2003, the Department dispatched a team of experts to Addis Ababa who subsequently formulated a set of recommendations to be implemented in two phases over a three-year period. The establishment of a V-SAT satellite link to enhance communication between African Union headquarters and field offices or special envoys and the introduction of improved teleconferencing and videoconferencing equipment are key targets for the second phase.

32. Experience has shown that disruption of law and order is a major consequence of all conflict situations. Alongside the vital role of the military in stabilizing a post-conflict situation, rebuilding the police capacity of a country is essential to assume responsibility for internal security. The United Nations can also provide advice to the African Union correction and penal experts in order to develop assessment mechanisms of prison systems in peacekeeping operations, which would also include templates for quick impact project proposals for emergency support and longer-term penal reform. Moreover, it can assist in identifying professional correctional expertise, which may be available to undertake penal reform and strengthening of prison systems, including training.

33. The United Nations is also developing best practices resources, including training and mentoring materials that it could share with the African Union as well as the subregional organizations and Member States.

34. The foregoing measures should be seen as part of an "open door" policy designed to give African regional and subregional organizations full access to updated information on conflicts and potential conflict zones in Africa, best practices and lessons learned, and mission planning templates and other relevant documents. Much of this material could be shared electronically at minimal cost to the Organization.

Observations

35. Africa is now the major theatre of peacekeeping operations. In general, this surge in peacekeeping is welcome, as it reflects the number of conflicts that are ending. But this increase also poses enormous challenges to the international system as it struggles to meet high levels of demand for peacekeeping. The African Union and its Member States have expressed willingness and have shown a growing capacity to meet many of those challenges. The United Nations has already provided some assistance to the African Union in its efforts, particularly in terms of planning. My view is that the Organization must be ready to provide a new level of support to the African Union as the Union moves forward and for this I will, when appropriate, seek a mandate and resources from the United Nations.

36. In crafting the package of support that the United Nations should provide to African Union peacekeeping capacity, we should be guided, above all, by the principles of flexibility and openness. We should support any initiative that promises to add real peacekeeping capacity where such capacity is needed, while eschewing any mechanism that would limit the room for non-African Member States to shoulder some of the burden for peacekeeping on that continent.

Peacekeeping in Africa is strengthened when it can benefit from troops and equipment from other regions, just as peacekeeping elsewhere is strengthened when all nations, including African nations, can contribute. In addition, the United Nations has significant comparative advantage with its unique capacity to deliver an integrated multidimensional response. As it is recognized that many conflicts are dealt with first at the regional level, the Organization's package of support should focus on planning and financial and logistical support for African Union start-up operations. This should be done while resisting the impulse towards a complete devolution of peacekeeping to the regions, which I believe would inevitably lead to a further erosion of the openness and universality that is the greatest strength of peacekeeping.

37. Finally, while viewing with great optimism the rapid development of African peacekeeping capacity, I should also note a parallel need in the field of post-conflict peacebuilding. In many countries, such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, the United Nations has found that it is able, through its peacekeeping forces, to provide a degree of security on the ground. This needs to be followed up with programmes that can engender a smooth transition to a sustainable peace: disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; rule of law; democratization and good governance. Without a firm and sustained commitment in these fields, even an enhanced African capacity in the area of peacekeeping will not be sufficient to ensure that the legacy of two generations of conflict in Africa is put firmly behind us. I will continue to highlight the urgent need for the international community to provide adequate support to strengthen African peacebuilding capacities.